

In the Claims

Please amend claims 4 and 5, and cancel claims 17 and 19-25.

1. (Original) A method for producing a consolidated cellulosic article, comprising the steps of:

providing a mat of cellulosic material and binder resin;

providing a first contoured front platen having a first pattern;

providing a first contoured rear platten having a pattern generally corresponding to the first pattern of the front platen;

consolidating the mat between the first contoured front platen and the first contoured rear platen under heat and pressure to form a molded softboard having a contoured front surface and a correspondingly contoured rear surface, the softboard having a substantially uniform density and substantially uniform caliper;

removing portions of the molded softboard up to a predetermined removal plane to form a softboard having a front surface and rear surface with desired contours;

providing a second contoured front platen having a contour substantially corresponding to the front surface;

providing a second contoured rear platen having a contour substantially corresponding to the contour of the rear surface; and

consolidating the softboard between the second contoured front platen and the second contoured rear platen, under heat and pressure.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein after the first consolidating step, the mat has a density of approximately ten to approximately thirty pounds per cubic foot.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the removing step is performed using a saw.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the saw is a rotary scalper.
5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the saw is a band saw.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including the steps of gathering cellulosic material removed from the mat after the first consolidating step and reusing the cellulosic material in subsequent iterations of the method.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including the step of injecting steam into the mat during the at least one of the first and second consolidating steps.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the removal step results in at least one planar top or bottom surface and wherein the second consolidating step is performed using a flat platen.
9. (Original) A method of producing a consolidated cellulosic article, comprising the steps of:
 - compressing a mat of cellulosic material and a binder resin between first and second contoured platens to produce a softboard having first and second, opposed, contoured sides;

removing cellulosic material from the softboard along one of the first or second sides in a planar fashion; and

subsequently compressing the mat between third and fourth platens, the third platen being contoured in a manner similar to the first side of the softboard, the fourth platen being contoured in a manner similar to the second side of the softboard.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the first and second platens are similarly contoured.
11. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the compressing steps are performed under heat and pressure.
12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the pressure is in the range of about five pounds per square inch to about one thousand pounds per square inch.
13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the removing step is performed using a rotary scalper.
14. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the removing step is performed using a band saw.
15. (Original) The method of claim 9, further including the steps of gathering the removed cellulosic material and reusing the removed cellulosic material.
16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, further including the step of

injecting steam into the mat during the ~~compression~~ compressing step.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the removing step results in a softboard having at least one flat side, and wherein at least one of the third and fourth platens is planar.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Canceled)